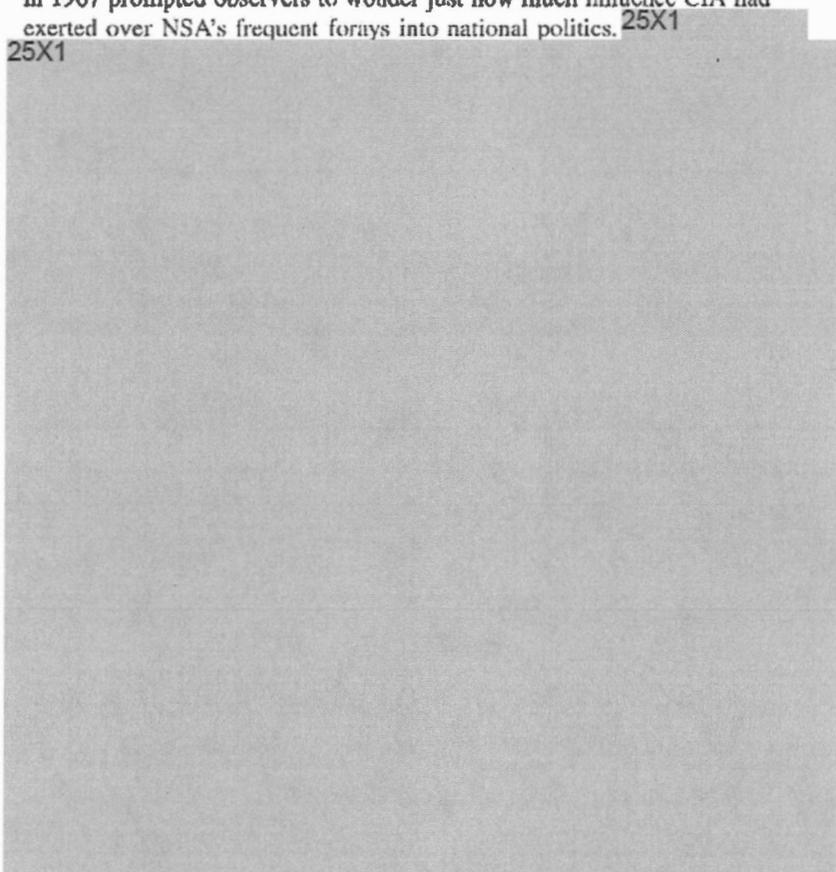


Politics (U)

The allegations and speculation arising from the *Ramparts* expose in 1967 prompted observers to wonder just how much influence CIA had exerted over NSA's frequent forays into national politics. 25X1



The CIA monitored NSA political statements primarily to ensure that the Association said nothing that would diminish its influence abroad. This was a difficult task. Rising calls for national liberation in the Third World combined with the more sophisticated approach of the IUS



25X1

after Stalin's death to put enormous strains on COSEC and the International Student Conference by the late 1950s. Many delegations from emerging Third World states urged the ISC to condemn colonialism and take up other issues that NSA (and the CIA) regarded as parochial and potentially divisive. Rumbblings against American "imperialism" abroad and racial discrimination at home could be heard in International Student Conferences even in the 1950s.³⁹ The ISC's West European delegates, for their part, objected to criticism from their present and former colonies. (U)

NSA had to walk a fine line between these two blocs. As the most influential member of the ISC, NSA tried to maintain its credibility with Third World students by demonstrating its sympathy for the legitimate and peaceful aspirations of the nonaligned world. Foreign student leaders paid close attention to NSA's domestic political activities as well. NSA had to prove its commitment to civil rights and reform at home as well as abroad. (U)

NSA's officers recognized the new situation and bent over backward to be sympathetic to the concerns of Third World students. The Association consistently applied the formula that its founders had devised in their battles with the IUS in the 1940s—that international student groups should debate political issues only insofar as those issues affected "students as students." The ISC did not always follow the "students as students" formula (and officially dropped it in 1960), but for a decade that rubric gave NSA's delegates the flexibility they needed to act as mediators in many contentious sessions of the International Student Conference. In the contemporary American political context, it stamped NSA as a moderately liberal organization, squarely in the mainstream of American political discourse. Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all considered NSA politically safe and routinely sent greetings and sometimes emissaries to its national Congresses each August. (U)

The CIA rarely intervened in NSA's debates over political issues, participating only on the margins when Agency officers feared the Association could split apart in political disputes or fall into the hands of extremists (of either the left or the right) who would fritter away the goodwill and influence that NSA had painstakingly acquired among foreign student leaders. Over the years CIA case officers contended with

³⁹For instance, the 7th International Student Conference, held in Ibadan, Nigeria, in September 1957, passed a resolution calling for an end to racial discrimination in the United States. (U)

three major developments that threatened the political balance that NSA tried to maintain: the civil rights struggle, the rise of conservatism as a political movement, and the Vietnam War. (U)

Debates over civil rights in the 1950s proved serious enough to jeopardize the Association's very existence. NSA's leaders 25X1

25X1 believed the Association should do what it could to promote an end to segregation on America's college campuses. Officers of the Association supported gradual integration not only for its own sake but also to protect the Association's image among students in the developing world. 25X1 endorsed this conclusion and assisted NSA's efforts to publicize (especially overseas) its support for racial integration at home. 25X1 Helen Jean Rogers of NSA's International Advisory Board gathered the signatures of 20 former NSA officers 25X1 on a lengthy 1956 public letter explaining to foreign students the problem of racism in the United States and listing NSA's efforts to combat it.⁶⁰ The following year, NSA's International Commission mailed another report to its foreign counterparts explaining the national controversy over integration in the schools of Little Rock, Arkansas. The Commission's letter also reminded readers that the latest NSA Congress (in August 1957) had passed a resolution deploring segregation.⁶¹ (S)

The Association's civil rights activities and programs began expanding rapidly in 1960. NSA offered financial and legal aid to black students engaged in lunch counter sit-ins in the South. It also played a role in the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC, in fact, grew out of an NSA workshop designed to teach political organizing skills to Southern students 25X1

25X1 For several years NSA's national affairs vice president held an *ex officio* seat on SNCC's board.⁶² National affairs vice presidents such as Tim Jenkins and Paul Potter worked closely with student activists and radicals, keeping NSA for a time in the vanguard of the civil rights movement.⁶³ For the

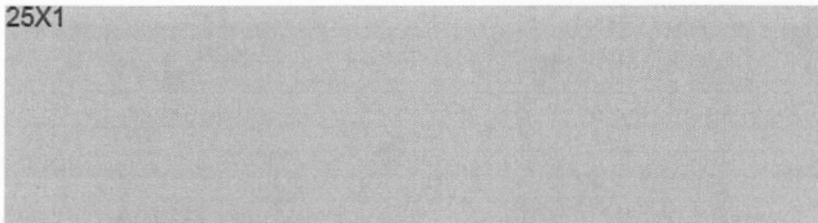
⁶⁰Helen Jean Rogers, et al., "A Letter About Racial Discrimination in the United States and Efforts for its Elimination," April 1956. 25X1

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⁶¹International Commission, National Student Association, "Report on Little Rock," published in late 1957. 25X1

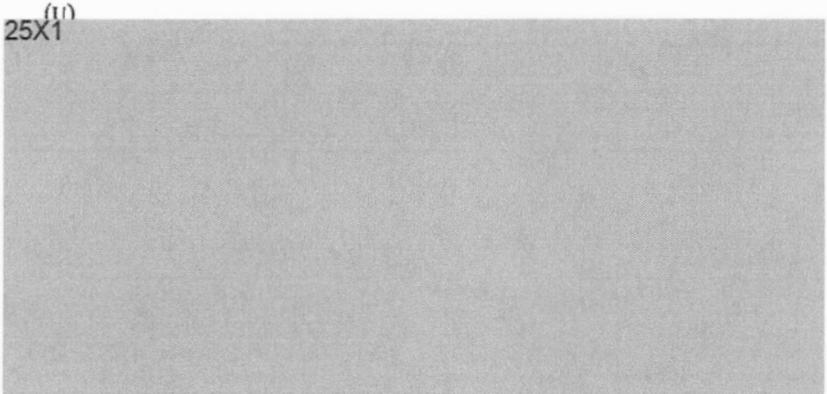
25X1

⁶²Steven V. Roberts, "Move to End CIA Tie Held Reflection of New Campus Views," *New York Times*, 16 February 1967, p. 16. Stern, "NSA," p. 30. (U)

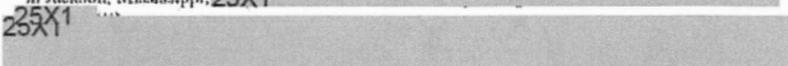
⁶³Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 39, 51, 60. See also Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), pp. 128, 139. (U)

25X1


NSA's support for integration infuriated some Association members and observers. Student governments at several Southern colleges withdrew from NSA over its stand, particularly after the Association applauded the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. In the late 1950s a few fraternities and sororities campaigned against NSA for endorsing calls for excision of the whites-only clauses still included in the constitutions of certain Greek-letter organizations. Segregationist commentators in the South also attacked NSA, usually accusing it of aiding Communist aims. Typical were charges by J.B. Matthews, who in 1958 accused NSA of fellow traveling: he said that its programs embraced the Communist line on education, and that its adult leaders and advisers showed the "high degree of left-wing and pro-Communist infiltration of the organization" (Rep. John Bell Williams [D-MS] subsequently inserted the Matthews tract in the *Congressional Record*).⁶⁶

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25X1


⁽¹⁾
"Congressional Record—House, 14 July 1958, pp. 12517-12519. See also "Student Group is Led by Reds," *The Citizens' Council*, August 1958, p. 1. This segregationist pamphlet was published in Jackson, Mississippi; 25X1

25X1


IO's concern intensified after the birth of a conservative youth group, the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), in 1960. Founded with the guidance and patronage of columnist William F. Buckley, Jr., YAF denounced NSA as the tool of an isolated liberal clique that was soft on Communism.⁶⁸ Harvard student leader Howard Phillips, an NSA member affiliated with YAF, rallied NSA's conservative minority and sparked a contentious but ultimately futile parliamentary assault on the liberal (and witting) Association leadership at the 1961 NSA Congress.⁶⁹ YAF continued its attacks during the following months, mounting a campaign that persuaded student bodies at several more colleges to withdraw from NSA.⁷⁰ (U)

25x1 [redacted] YAF might do serious damage to NSA. 25x1 [redacted] in early 1962, noting the growing appeal of conservatism's "pat solutions" among "segments of the American public which have difficulty understanding domestic economic, or international political questions." YAF was making inroads among college students and threatening to coax the student bodies at the Universities of Missouri, Michigan, and Texas to end their NSA affiliations. [redacted] the loss of the latter two schools would be particularly injurious; both had given NSA more than their share of top-notch officers. Beyond that, "disaffiliations at more universities would tend to bring into question USNSA's claim to represent American students and could seriously hamper the USNSA international program."⁷¹ (S)

⁶⁸William F. Buckley apparently loathed NSA and recognized that its ostensible sponsor, the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs, was a covert front for the US Government. 25x1 [redacted]

25x1 [redacted] Buckley did not seem to mind the idea that the US Government was sponsoring youth and student groups as much as he minded the government's choice of groups to support. 25x1 [redacted]

25x1 [redacted]

⁶⁹YAF's challenge and NSA's response are described in John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), pp. 91-97. (U)

25x1 [redacted]

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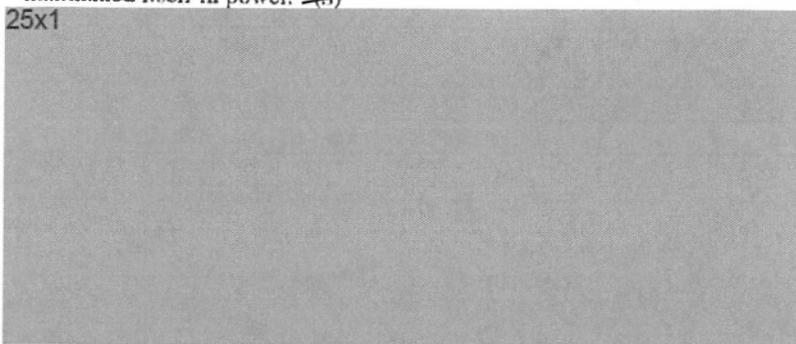
NSA's response and YAF's own difficulties, however, soon diminished the threat that [REDACTED] NSA's self-described "establishment" took pains to explain its anti-Communist international program to the Association's membership and to ensure that the agenda and procedures at the annual NSA Congress in 1962 were politically balanced and more participatory. These efforts mollified some conservative delegates and diluted the strength of YAF's charges. In any case, NSA's conservatives themselves had already shot their bolt, disrupting the 1961 Congress but also revealing their relative numerical weakness. The conservative revolt against the Association's liberal leadership petered out when Howard Phillips and other conservative leaders moved on after graduation."¹¹ (S)

The relative calm of the Association's 1962 Congress soon proved itself but the eye of the hurricane; the winds that had blown from the political right not long afterward shifted to blow from the left. Progressive activists—who were beginning to call themselves the New Left—focused their energies on a small but re-energized group, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). "Part of the reason the SDS got formed," recalls [REDACTED] "was that the left made a series of runs at the NSA leadership" but failed to win any offices higher than national affairs vice president. The SDS' Tom Hayden, for instance, lost two NSA elections

¹¹Ibid., pp. 5-6. (U)
25X1

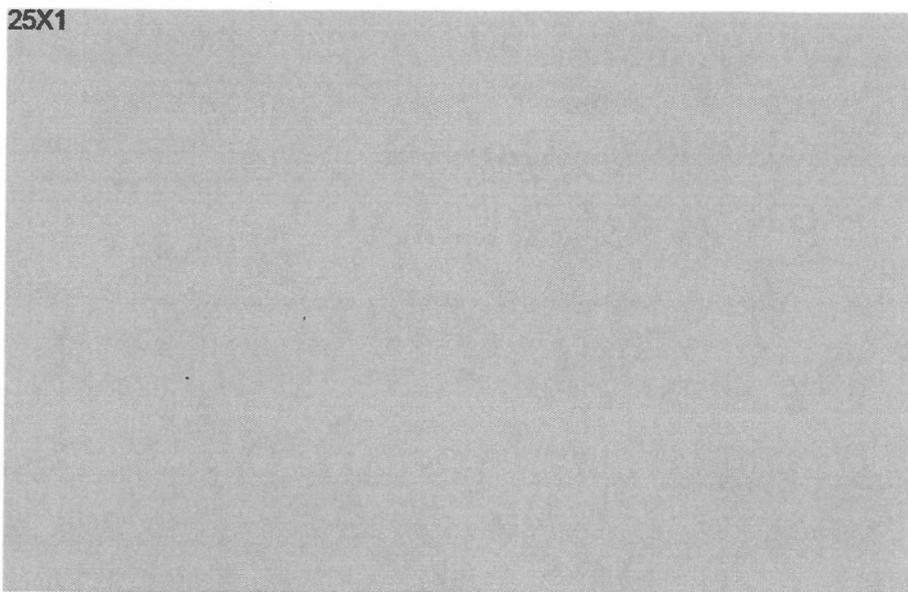
and did not make the cut for NSA's International Student Relations Seminar [redacted].⁷³ Frozen out by the liberal NSA "control group," left-leaning activists began organizing on their own—and wondering how the leadership of NSA maintained itself in power.⁷⁴ (S)

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Growing Mistrust (U)

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25X1



⁷⁴For an SDS view of the struggle, see Hayden, *Reunion*, pp. 35-39, 48-52. (U)

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25x1

The International Union of Students faced troubles, too. The IUS had regained some of its popularity in the mid-1950s by appealing to neutralist, Third World students, but deepening intra-Marxist doctrinal disputes divided its leadership in the mid-1960s. The Soviet "control group" almost lost its commanding position to a challenge mounted by an unlikely alliance of Chinese delegates and "rightwing" Communist East Europeans at the 1964 World Student Congress in Sofia.⁷⁸ With both the IUS and the ISC in decline, the ideological threat to American students that had loomed in the 1940s and 1950s now looked increasingly distant, and NSA officers grew increasingly distrustful of the CIA's struggle against Communism. (S)

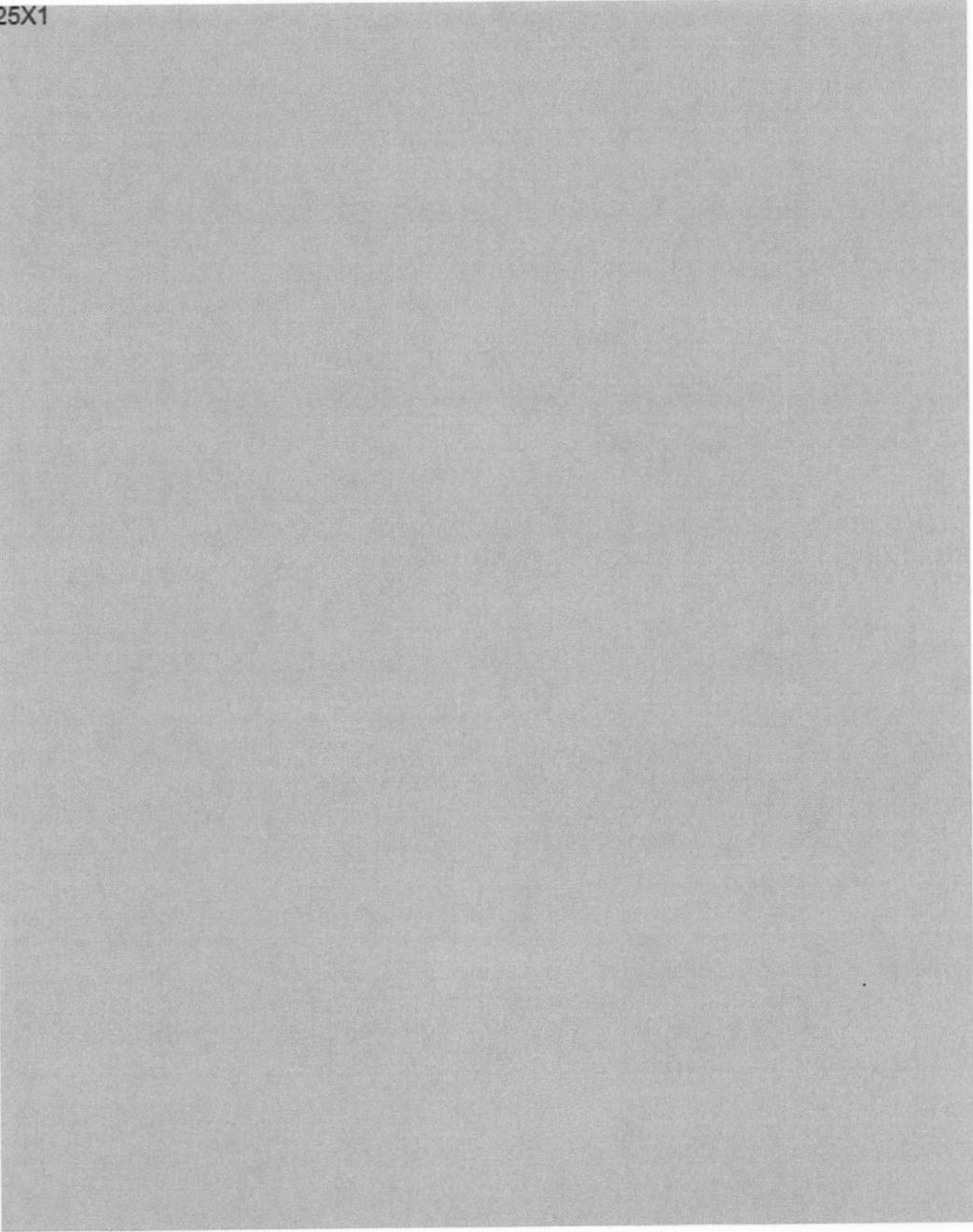
NSA's 1963 elections marked a turning point. 25x1

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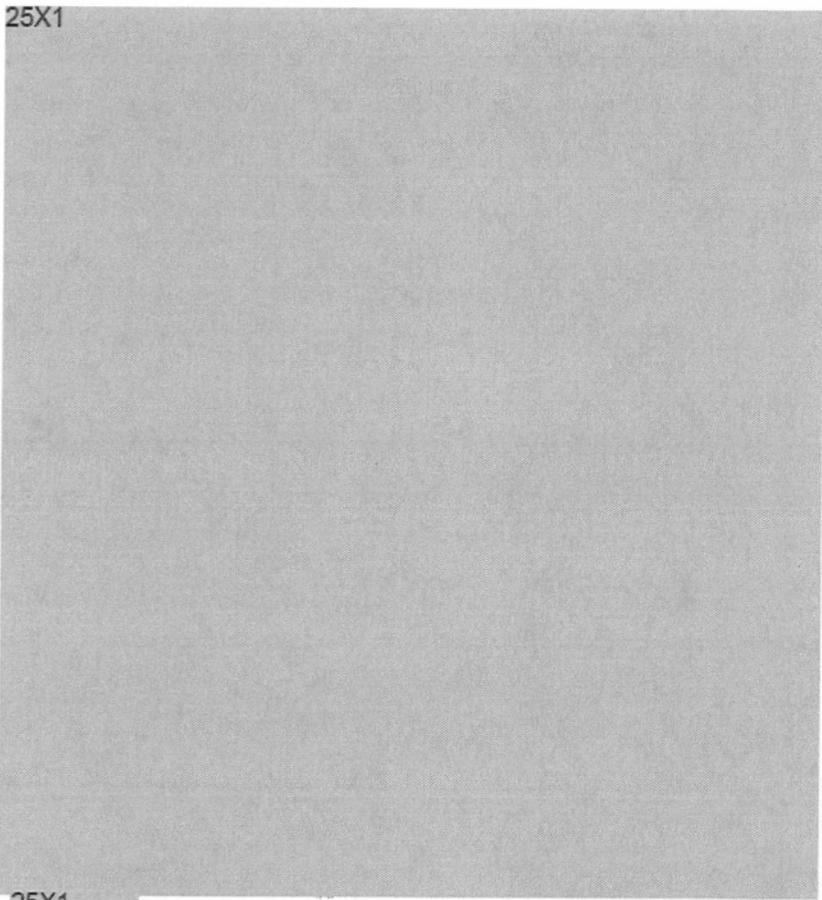
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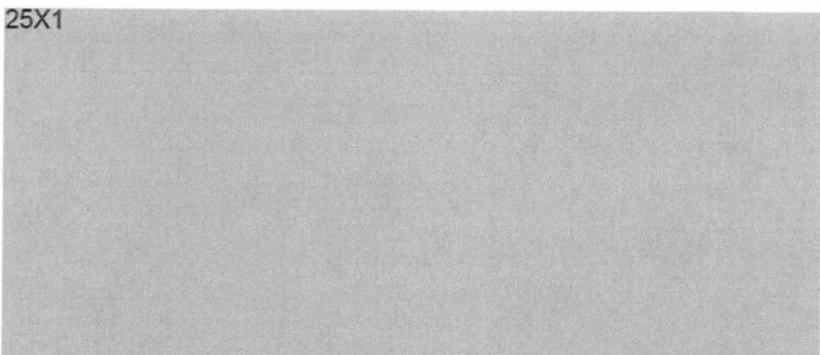
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Sherburne later told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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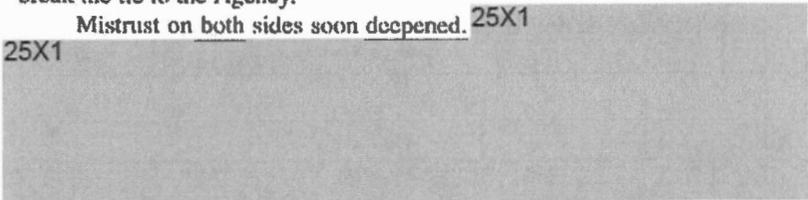
Philip Sherburne determined to break NSA's ties to CIA. (U)

Walter Bennett ©

that Robbins at that time had urged him to run for NSA president with a plan for raising new funds for the Association that would allow NSA to break the tie to the Agency.⁴⁴

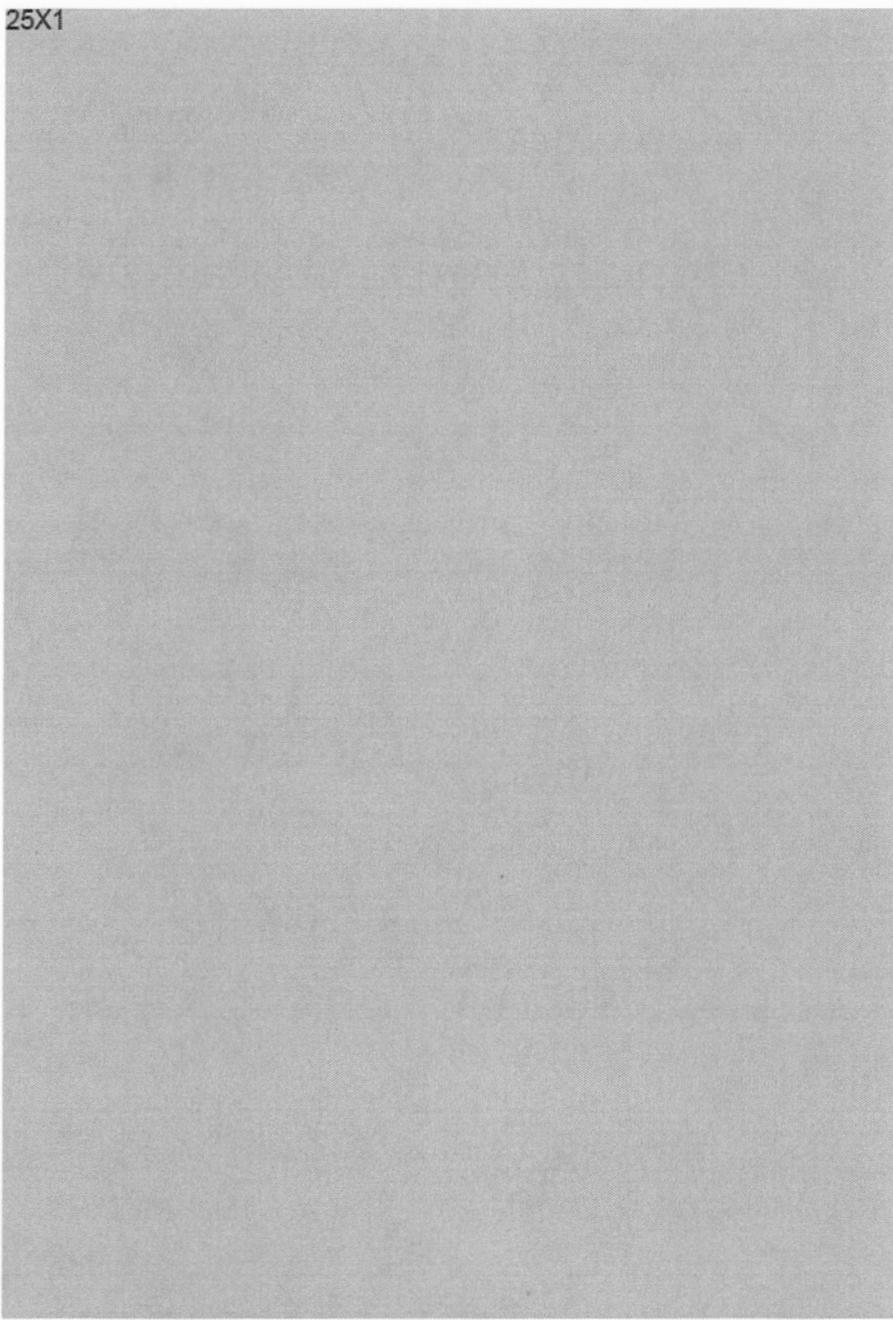
Mistrust on both sides soon deepened. 25X1

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⁴⁴US Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, unpublished testimony of Philip Sherburne, 6 March 1967, pp. 56-58, cited hereafter as "Sherburne testimony." The Foreign Relations Committee declassified this testimony in 1997. See also Stearns, "We Were Wrong," p. 353. (U)

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in the autumn of 1965 without additional problems, the sense of injury and suspicion it engendered among the NSA agents extended to the Association's new president, Philip Sherburne. (S)

Sherburne had resolved privately to do what he could to extricate NSA from its clandestine ties to CIA. Soon after his election, Sherburne started making ominous remarks about the CIA-NSA relationship.

learned that Sherburne and some of his fellow agents had begun to question the morality of NSA's links to CIA; they viewed CIA "in very James Bondian terms . . . [and believed CIA was] out to undermine and subvert any individual or organization who disagrees" with US policies.¹¹ One of Sherburne's aides was reported to be emotionally distressed by the very existence of the covert relationship.¹² Sherburne himself showed more rationality in his misgivings. He concluded that NSA should criticize American actions in Southeast Asia and lead the nation's students to exercise a more active role in national political debates. He also proposed that the CIA subsidy come packaged more like regular foundation grants, with NSA submitting a prospectus for a proposed program and the Agency paying the cost of the particular project plus a standard 20 percent for administrative overhead.¹³

Sherburne and other NSA officers viewed the CIA's concern with Communist-dominated IUS as a relic of the Cold War, perhaps necessary at one time but now counterproductive in light of the new "detente"

25X1

¹¹Sherburne testimony, p. 61. (U)

between the United States and the Soviet Union.* Eugene Groves, Sherburne's successor as NSA president, would express much the same thought 25X1

25X1

Sherburne's unease about the morality of the CIA tie undoubtedly mingled, in his mind, with a concern over NSA's leftward political drift. The challenge from the Young Americans for Freedom had given way to a series of attacks by the radical Students for a Democratic Society. SDS criticized NSA's foreign and domestic liberalism for being wedded to "establishment" ideas and values, especially in the context of the growing debate over the Vietnam war. SDSers even examined NSA's annual reports and publicly concluded that NSA must have been taking covert payments from the US Government.** Indeed, the mood on many campuses was growing antagonistic toward US foreign policy, and the 1965 NSA Congress approved resolutions criticizing the escalating war in Vietnam and the Johnson administration's recent military intervention in the Dominican Republic. Sherburne almost certainly believed that his own power in NSA, as well as the Association's influence among college students, depended to a significant degree on his ability to keep abreast of the political shift on America's campuses. (U)

Sherburne's political line and the situation in NSA turned to fury in late 1965 when Sherburne wheedled his International Affairs Vice President, Carleton Stoiber, into resigning.

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*US Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, unpublished testimony of Eugene Groves, 16 March 1967, p. 167; hereafter cited as "Groves testimony." This transcript was declassified by the Foreign Relations Committee in 1997. (U)

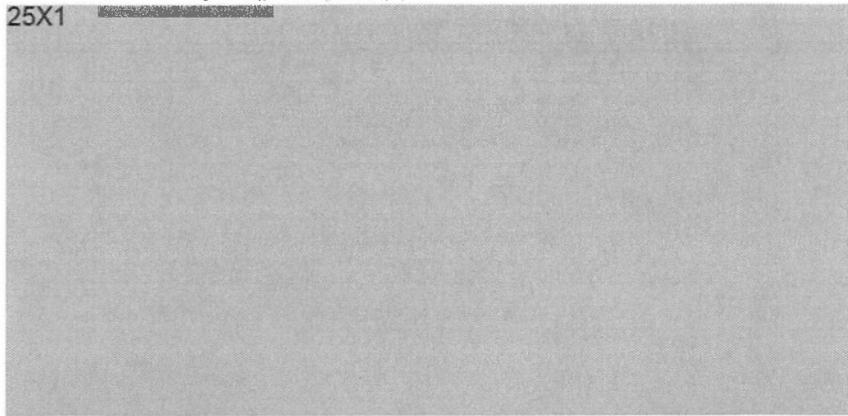
**Sherburne testimony, p. 110. (U)

25X1



Tom Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society, which accused NSA of taking covert funds. (U)

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25X1
[Redacted]

25X1 Sherburne was unhappy with the cuts; he had already laid staffing and fundraising plans believing that NSA would receive a larger subsidy from the Agency.¹⁰⁸ He responded philosophically, however, wondering aloud whether NSA should have any relationship with the CIA but agreeing that both organizations had an interest in cooperating on certain limited international projects.¹⁰⁹ 25X1

25X1 [Redacted]

The CIA's funding cutback meant immediate hardship for NSA. Sherburne informed the Association's National Supervisory Board in March 1966 that the national headquarters might have to release several staffers because grants were likely to fall far short of expenses.¹⁰⁸ 25X1

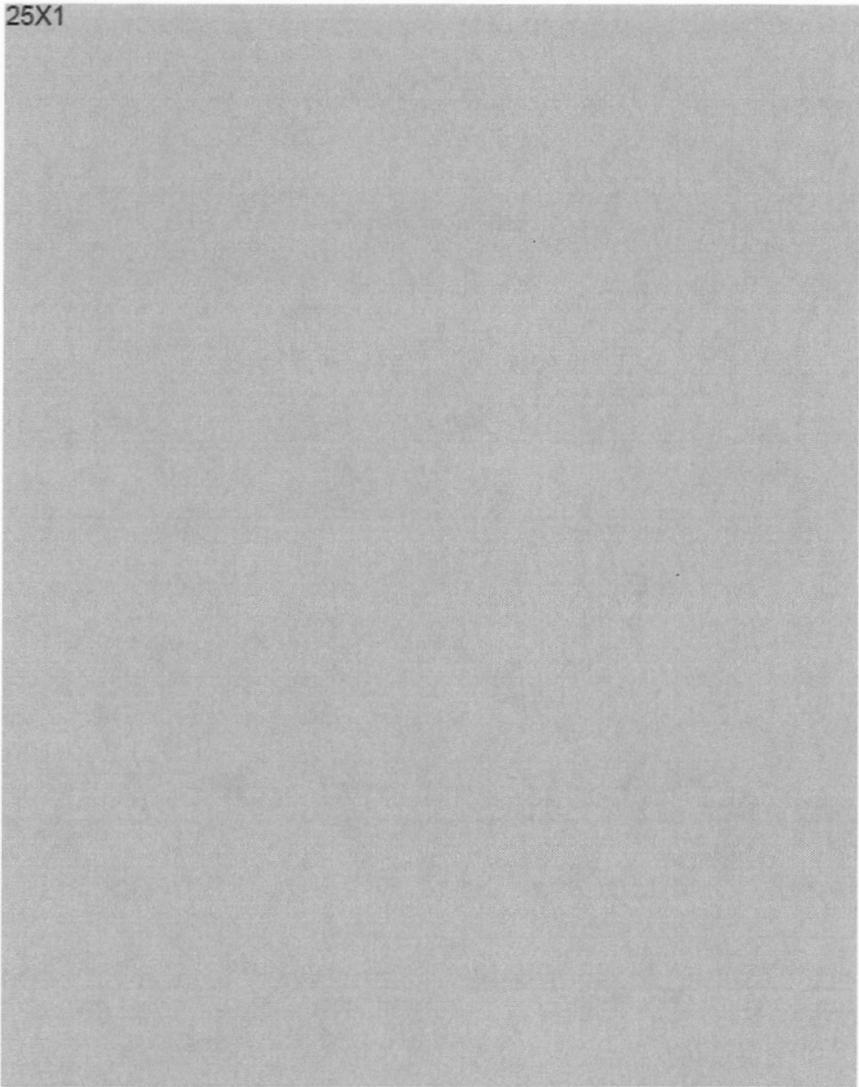
25X1 [Redacted]

25X1 [Redacted]

¹⁰⁸Sherburne testimony, p. 66, (U) 25X1 [Redacted]

¹⁰⁹Philip Sherburne to the NSA National Supervisory Board, 17 March 1966, 25X1 25X1 [Redacted]

25X1



Sherburne at this point unknowingly set in motion the chain of events that led to the *Ramparts* expose. According to *Ramparts*, in March 1966 Sherburne privately told a friend—Michael Wood of

25X1



Pomona College, NSA's Director for Development—about the covert relationship. Wood, who had joined NSA in the spring of 1965, had grown frustrated with the inexplicable secrecy and apparent slackness in NSA's fundraising efforts. He went to Sherburne shortly before the latter's trip to South Vietnam and threatened to resign if he did not receive more responsibility. At the same time, Wood's staff had tired of his complaints about alleged sloppy work.¹⁰⁷ To keep peace in the office while he was traveling in Southeast Asia, Sherburne invited Wood to lunch one afternoon and explained to him exactly why the Association could not give him full authority over NSA fundraising. Although Sherburne apparently believed that ██████████ considered Wood a security risk, he divulged to Wood the Agency's links to NSA, piling secret on secret in what must have been something of an emotional release.¹⁰⁸ (U)

25X1

██████████ new NSA officers came to Washington in the fall of 1966.¹⁰⁹ Sherburne, for his part, had decided to do what he could to preserve NSA ██████████

25X1 He hired eight staffers to raise new funds, and trimmed other staff and expenses.¹¹⁰ He also talked to contacts in Vice President Hubert Humphrey's office to enlist the Vice President's aid in finding private funds for the Association. (S)

These efforts together raised \$300,000 in additional funds from expanded foundation and governmental grants. NSA had not eliminated its deficit, but it would now be able to survive without CIA support.¹¹¹ NSA's overseas projects, however, garnered little new interest among potential donors—some of whom, Sherburne later claimed, had even heard rumors of CIA support for NSA and did not want to get "messed up" in covert operations.¹¹² (C)

From the CIA's perspective, the NSA Congress in August 1966 went badly. One delegate told *Time* magazine that the Congress was really a conclave of "the left left-wingers and the right left-wingers."¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Stern, "NSA," p. 35. Wood's problems with his staff—a situation unmentioned by the *Ramparts* article—were noted on page 3 of Larry Rubin's "diary," released by the NSA-affiliated United States Student Press Association in mid-1967. 25X1

25X1

¹⁰⁸ Sherburne testimony, p. 77. (U) Michael Wood testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the same day as Sherburne, and both transcripts were bound (and declassified) together. Wood's story will be hereinafter cited as "Wood testimony"; See pp. 5-7. (U)

25X1

¹⁰⁹ "The Silent Service," *Time*, 24 February 1967, p. 15. (U)

¹¹⁰ Stern, "NSA," p. 36." Sherburne testimony, pp. 63, 67. 25X1

25X1

¹¹¹ Sherburne testimony, p. 116. (U)

¹¹² "The Crowded Left," *Time*, 9 September 1966, p. 46. (U)



NSA president Eugene Groves. (U)

AP ©

Sherburne had recruited a like-minded successor in Eugene Groves—a graduate of the University of Chicago's physics department and a Rhodes Scholar whom [REDACTED] had flagged as an "SDS candidate" a year earlier. Groves beat a more conservative challenger in the presidential election.¹⁴ Groves and his fellow officers remained centrists in relation

25X1

[REDACTED]

to other student leaders, but the spectrum of student politics had shifted leftward. The Congress passed a Vietnam resolution that was more strident than its 1965 version, calling for an immediate bombing halt and a withdrawal of American troops. Few delegates defended the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy; many wanted even stronger criticism than that contained in the final resolution. The Congress also passed a resolution calling for an end to the peacetime draft.¹¹⁵ (U)

The bad news got even worse when [redacted] someone in NSA had leaked damaging information about the covert relationship. On 31 August Ed Schwartz, NSA's new national affairs vice president, told 25X1 [redacted] that the CIA was secretly subsidizing NSA.

25X1
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25X1

A drunken NSA staffer or officer (probably Wood or Sherburne) had disclosed the relationship in some detail to Schwartz a few months earlier. Schwartz mentioned the matter to Groves in early August. 25X1

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In September, 25X1 [redacted] tried to track down the source of the leak, but Groves and Sherburne pleaded ignorance.¹¹⁶ (S)

Groves and his new team had already decided to end the relationship with CIA as quickly and quietly as possible. He later explained that he spent much of that autumn considering various alternatives and weighing their respective risks to NSA and its personnel. A sudden cutoff of CIA support could force NSA into bankruptcy, especially if the Agency found a way to evict the Association from its subsidized Washington offices. Groves worried that this could leave NSA's young male employees without jobs--and without their draft deferments. Needing time to strengthen NSA's financial situation, he agreed to continue dealing with the Agency on two programs only.¹¹⁷ (C)

¹¹⁵"Student Unit Asks US Abolish Draft, Set Up Alternatives," *New York Times*, 1 September 1966, p. 6. (U)

25X1

¹¹⁷W. Eugene Groves, "President's Report - Part I," submitted to the 20th Congress of the National Student Association, August 1967, pp. 2-4; 25X1

25X1

See also Groves testimony, pp. 135, 137. (U)